But

Weisberg

8/13/70

Dr. Ralph Abernathy
Southern Christian Leadership Conference
Atlanta, Ga.

Dear Dr. Abernathy,

This is a more painful letter to write than the others (all unanswered) that I have written you, every SCLC official I could, all of Dr. King's friends I could approach, all the black leaders within my reach, and those with him when he was assassinated who have helped themselves be made into black Judasses. Several black members of Congress, too, as well as black publishers and other personalities, such as leading entertainers.

The intended defamation in the current TIME and the attendant publicity could have been reduced, if not eliminated, by the open and honest airing of the inherent FBI blackmail, as I do it in my study of the assassination, which you would not take the time to read or send someone to examine. One of you, Mr. Whitney Young, in conversation with me a year ago, confirmed my suspicion that all black leaders were engaging in self-blackmail in your futility.

Without rancor and intending no personal insult, I ask you, as a man and as a Christian minister, to justify your and all other silences about this assassination and the obviously framed solution. Is this the manly course, the dedication of true friends of the victim of a murder? Is this the course of those dedicated to a decent society? Of those seeking a better life for those so long and so unjustly denied it?

It is a cowardly course, one that defames friendship as it does honor, regardless of any seemingly utilitarian self-justification behind which you all hide, like in the fable of the Emperor's Clothes.

I did not ask that you help me get my work published, or that you help finance my investigation, although I think the book, with its extensive documentation, including of the Birmingham murders and the disgraceful, truly subversive record of the FBI, would have raised funds for your work. I asked only that you (plural) inform yourselves, seek and learn the truth.

It is Dr. King's great tragedy, as it was John Kennedy's, that among his friends, among those made great by the touch of his greatness, there was no single one with the manhood to follow the biblical injunction.

Only truth can set you free from the captivity of this record. If it is already late, I beg of you, in your own interest, do not let it get later still without doing what the course of personal honor and genuine dedication to those things of which you speak require of you. See the evidence I have gathered and included in the completed book.

Letter to Time enclosed

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg